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Older Persons in the Family: Facets of Empowerment

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I. Concept of empowerment

Concept and practice

A bear, caged, is given to a city. The citizens decide to construct a large park for it; that takes a year. Then the cage is removed. Surrounded by the wide spaces of the park, the bear continues to walk the now imaginary, narrow confines of the cage, whose boundaries are etched on its mind, restricting its movements.

The experience of the bear shows that empowerment has two sides: it resides within, in the psyche, and it lies without, in the environment.

Governments and development agencies generally try to create the environmental conditions needed for empowerment. Educators and psychologists try to release the inner powers for self-empowerment. Ultimately, it is only the self who empowers. Napoleon was an infamous example of self-empowerment. When about to be crowned head of the Holy Roman Empire, he took the crown from the Pope's hands and placed it on his own head.

Besides this inner-outer dichotomy, the Oxford Dictionary expresses another. It says that empowerment means both "to give power to" and "to make able". To give power has a clear political connotation; to make able has a more practical one. The political empowerment of many new countries in the past 50 years, regardless of their size or wealth, establishes the climate for guaranteeing the same rights to individuals: individual sovereignty regardless of power or wealth. The political empowerment of individuals lies in their having decision-making power over their own lives and in their being able to change situations (i.e. not only to adapt to them).

The great stress placed on popular participation in development during the past 20 years gave expression to the practical meaning of empowerment. The purpose of popular participation was "to make able" mostly through small-scale self-help activities. In the present paper, the term empowerment is meant to encompass practical and political, as well as emotional and interpersonal, dimensions.

Power-sharing lies at the heart of many current development efforts and it is the basis of slogans such as: from top-down to bottom-up; from hierarchy to participation; from formal to informal organization; from conferred to elected authority; and from ascribed to earned status. These terms denote a power shift. They signify power as a shared commodity and, possibly, one that expands as it is shared. It can no longer be viewed as a scarce commodity, obtainable by the very few to the exclusion of the majority. Even if temporarily checked today and possibly reshaped by the test of market forces, power-sharing is a concept whose time has come.

The concept of empowerment is understood and practised in as many ways as there are countries or groups. It may be used as a mobilizing slogan, while subtly coopting support for centralized decisions. It may be promoted courageously and altruistically, only to empower actors who subsequently disenfranchise others. It may give rise to institutional structures that empower one group to empower others, such as social services, which too often inadvertently create or perpetuate dependency. Empowerment may be a topic of heated debate in some places and taboo in others.

Factors preventing the debate or practice of empowerment may include: social deference, alternative means of influencing decision-making, lack of consultative skills and fear of assuming additional responsibilities.

The empowerment of countries has created interdependence and, in turn, the need for new consultative and collaborative mechanisms at the global level. So it is with individuals in the

family or community. As the numbers of active decision makers increase, mechanisms of cooperation are needed to replace the domination that formerly gave order and direction to affairs.

Consultative expressions of inter dependence at the global level have had more success than legalistic ones. Attempts in the 1970s to legalize or institutionalize interdependence between countries have been more controversial than successful, notably, the New International Economic Order and the New International Information Order. One result of the heated debates that prevailed between the North and the South on these themes is that little attempt has been made to establish an ideal "family order" in the preparations for the International Year of the Family (IYF) 1994. Family forms are in any case too varied and fluid to submit to a neat order.

A slogan used in promoting IYF, however, suggests democracy to be an important common denominator for families throughout the world. In a widely used poster for IYF, a caption announces: "Building the smallest democracy at the heart of society".

Democratization, participation, interdependence and other words in the lexicon of empowerment are to be found in the recent reports and recommendations on social and economic development. Some complain that the many and proliferating conferences and debates on development end just there: with words, which to some extent is true. Equally true, however, is the need for such talking shops, at which a consensus on common global values is emerging.

Recommendations

A few recommendations close this short exploration of the concept and practice of empowerment:

(a) The concept of empowerment, with its myriad local interpretations, should be further analysed and promoted as a global code or canon;

(b) The empowerment of individuals gives access to power and decision-making, which calls for improved modes of cooperation such as consultation. Consultative skills should be developed as an essential art and science of the twenty-first century;

(c) Older persons who have the advantage of lifelong experiences should be encouraged and trained in the art and science of consultation.

II. Families: first resource and last resort

Changes in structure

Across the world, family forms vary and change over time. In the traditional scheme of things, power in the family, as elsewhere, resided with men and especially with older men, although women at times exercised emotional and financial power.

Men and women did not and still do not always see eye to eye. One reason for this, according to sociologists, is that they speak different languages. This verbal division arises because from the moment of birth, male and female children are spoken to differently, and they talk differently as a result.

To achieve democracy in the family, men and women need to learn each other's language. Communication is essential to democracy which, Clement Attlee believed, is Government by discussion, or, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is "a system of government by the whole population". Democracy in the family requires what has been called "self-otherness", which is neither selfish nor selfless. 1/

Population change is helping to usher in democratic change in the family. As the horizontally extended family of three well-populated generations gives way to a vertically extended family of four, five and even six smaller generations (the "beanpole" family), the traditional hierarchy of parent-child and husband-wife relationships is changing.

The authority and decisiveness that parents need to exercise in socializing their young children must give way to a more equal, or mature, relationship with adult offspring, a relationship that can last twice the number of years devoted to child-rearing. Mature children may find it difficult to maintain a close relationship with parents if the latter continue to treat them as immature.

Parental and marital roles used to be nearly synonymous. As child-rearing years are shortened, and lives lengthen, a married couple can expect their partnership to extend well beyond the parental stage, requiring that they relate to each other in ways other than parenting. This results, possibly, in a marriage that is less utilitarian and more, in a sense, spiritual: one that succeeds in perpetuating the closeness and warmth of the early years of marriage. A mutually supportive and enabling relationship is important to establish in the middle years, when it may not be so essential, in anticipation of older years, when it may be crucial.

Empowering older women

In many pre-industrial societies, age empowers women in the family and the community. In such societies, when women reach mid-life, and elder status, they become

> "... much less subject to male authority and may engage in a variety of activities not permitted to younger women. Nor do they need to exhibit the same degree of deference to males or hold to the same rules of modesty in dress and action. They may ignore some language taboos and begin to speak freely and with authority. ... They may also travel from home much more freely than younger women. All this means that older women potentially have more possibility to challenge men in the councils, engage in

commerce and trade beyond the boundaries of their villages, and collaborate in organizational activities."*

Roles that empower older women in these societies include: midwife and healer; administrator of household resources, lands and other property; trader and businesswoman; and practitioner of traditional skills. While older women in pre-industrial societies are themselves quite liberated, they often help to perpetuate the submissiveness of younger women.*

Industrialization limits older women's power in the family and community. Agribusiness usually makes smallholdings unprofitable. Plastic manufactured goods take the place of handicrafts. Doctors and medical services take over women's midwifery and healing arts. Wise counsel is no longer valued because the young can better manipulate information systems and new technologies. Radio, films and television tell a better story. Wave after wave of new technologies pour in, stripping older generations of their role, status and income security. Older persons are often portrayed in negative stereotypes on film, especially older women. Older women of industrial and post-industrial societies may well wish for the pastoral past, or feel compelled to work towards a better future.

Older women are certainly doing that and changing the global agenda. The 33-million-strong American Association of Retired Persons was started by one such woman. The Grey Panthers by another. The work of Mother Teresa, and the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi and Corazon Aquino are well known, all of whom are household names.

Older men: in and out of the family

Empowerment with regard to older men in traditional societies would imply a need to empower others, i.e. to share power with others, including in the family. In industrial and post-industrial societies, older men are increasingly released, at about the age of 60, from their power-oriented middle years of breadwinning and child-rearing. After the rigours of 25 years in a mine or boardroom, many older men are happy to "cross-over", becoming more gentle, relaxed, sensitive and emotional while their erstwhile housebound wives start a business, return to school or run for mayor.

Where divorce is widespread, many older men lose touch with their children and other family members. Single older men have high rates of suicide. Suicide rates correlate highly with factors such as male sex, increasing age, single or divorced state and widowhood as well as alcohol consumption. 2/

There are many possible reasons for this pattern. It could be a reaction to changing societal values: a consequence of unrealistic early conditioning for manhood that exaggerates power and neglects emotion; an inward-turning violence; or a manifestation of different kinds of empowerment where, for example, a man is empowered politically and economically but feels powerless before his own emotions and interpersonal relationships. Conversely, women could be - by nature or nurture - more empowered psychologically, personally and interpersonally than men, while having less legitimated power over their economic and political destiny.

Powerlessness in any area:

> "Sets in motion a series of self-reinforcing defeats which have been described in the literature as learned helplessness, loss of self-esteem and feelings of hopelessness". 3/

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*As quoted in Elsa M. Chaney, "Empowerment of older women: evidence from historical contemporary sources", *Empowering Older Women: Cross-Cultural Views* (Washington, D.C., American Association of Retired Persons and International Federation on Ageing, 1990), p. 12.

Felt powerlessness may persist long after opportunities for power are available, as in the case of the bear with which this paper began.

Occasionally, and usually jokingly, someone asks why the United Nations has no programme for men, since it has programmes for women, youth, disabled persons, ageing and the family. As global development moves up a ladder of basic needs, from physiological and security needs to love and self-esteem, there may come a time to establish a programme for men

Picasso's paradox

Empowerment in old age takes 60 years to develop. Pablo Picasso believed that it took a long time to grow young, meaning an archetypal youthfulness characterized by invention and openness.

Old is also an archetypical symbol, at least in traditional societies. It signifies understanding and responsibility. Individuals often cross over the chronological divide, and are old in youth and young in old age.

The well-known eight stages of the life cycle provide a useful working concept of individual development. 4/ At each stage - infancy, early childhood, play age, school age, adolescence, early adulthood, adulthood and old age - there is something to learn: trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity and, in old age, ego integrity. Each earlier learning experience can mature into different facets of wisdom in old age. For example, if trust is learnt in infancy, it matures into appreciation of interdependence and relatedness in old age. Initiative, if learnt in the play age, leads to humour, empathy and resilience in old age, and so on.

Others too have tried to mark off the life course in stages. The Comanches (native Americans) had five life stages; the Kikuyu of Kenya, six for males and eight for females; the Andaman Islanders, 23 for men; and the Incas had 10.*

The life cycle may be seen as a continuous growth, as a denouement of innate capabilities and a response to opportunities in the environment. Lifelong experiences can increase humour, insight and an understanding of the grand scheme of things. It can enable older people to be expert counsellors, mediators, keepers of the lineage, writers, storytellers and managers.

For those who reach very old age, such growth may seem paradoxical: maturity and fulfilment on the one hand, and an ability to accept decline on the other, be it in intellectual, physical or social powers. While the learning experience requires accepting decline and dependency, if inevitable, it does not mean accepting abuse or negative stereotyping.

Ultimate powerlessness

The ultimate powerlessness in the family occurs with abuse: physical, sexual, psychological or financial abuse. It is exacerbated when there is no recourse. In the past 10 years, abuse of older persons in the family or domestic setting has come to light.

Causes of elder abuse are complex, arising from any one of the following: the older person's behaviour, the abuser's personality, family dynamics or environmental pressures.

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*As quoted in Elsa M. Chaney, "Empowerment of older women: evidence from historical contemporary sources", *Empowering Older Women: Cross-Cultural Views* (Washington, D.C., American Association of Retired Persons and International Federation on Ageing, 1990), p. 6.

One distraught abuser asked:

> "What do you do when you find the Nana you have known and loved for 33 years is somebody you don't like. When you find that this cherished person is lazy, dirty and completely uncaring for anybody else. ... You are weary of coping with endless demands, endless complaints and endless feigned illnesses not to mention endless emotional blackmail. ..." 5/

Under the burden of care, that caregiver lashed out. In other cases, the caregiver may be settling old scores, after the "fall of the tyrant": taking revenge on a once-powerful parent for real or imagined slights and hurts sustained in childhood.

The traits found irritating and provocative in the dependent older person have been identified in the literature as: selfishness, self-pity, masochism, sadism, complaining, feigned illnesses, indulging in amateur dramatics and begging for overdoses or to be smothered or killed.

Traits found in abusers include: low-self esteem, poor coping mechanisms and communication skills, drug or alcohol abuse, mental illness. The abuser may feel: trapped and resent loss of career, friends and leisure time; disappointment at inadequate recognition or rewards for caregiving; and outrage at the injustice of an unshared caregiving burden within the family.

Family dynamics contributing to abuse include: poor family integration; cycles of violence inherited by each generation; sibling feuds; and social isolation removing the family from the controlling factor of neighbourhood disapproval.

Environmental factors contributing to elder abuse may include: unemployment, inadequate housing, migration, man-made and natural disasters.

Gathering information on domestic elder abuse is usually difficult. Anxiety or withdrawal symptoms in the elderly can easily be misinterpreted as age-related feebleness. Family loyalty and dependency keep older persons from reporting abuse. In some cases, reporting abuse could further strain family relationships and result in the institutionalization of the older person (a course of action to be avoided except when necessary for medical care).

Family loyalties make it difficult for family members to report on domestic abuse. Neighbours and service professionals, particularly primary health-care staff and general medical practitioners, are probably best placed to observe and report an incidence of abuse. Neighbourhood Watch programmes and similar community self-help efforts may be effective in preventing and exposing mistreatment, and in providing support to families in need.

A multidisciplinary team approach is often recommended for assessing and treating cases of domestic elder abuse, with well identified tasks for all team members and a designated key worker to keep in regular contact with the elder.

A tentative definition of domestic elder abuse might read as follows: "A domestic caregiver's illegitimate control or (intentional?) systematic physical, psychological or financial maltreatment or neglect of an elderly person". The component parts might further be defined as follows:

Illegitimate control: Guardianship assumed or gained by a relative beyond the needs of the elder, which may result in forced institutionalization or unwarranted control of the elder's assets.

Physical abuse: Violent or sexual assault including beatings, pushing, scalding and burning; ejection from home; withholding food, warmth and medicines; overdose of medication.

Psychological abuse : Fear and isolation techniques including chronic verbal aggression; insults; threats of assaults or of admission to mental hospital; withholding security or affection; isolation in a locked room; confinement to bed against will; mock strangling. Some of these may be familial or socio-cultural behavioural patterns rather than the deliberate abuse of an elder.

Financial abuse: Improper appropriation of an elder's pension or cash.

Recommendations

The following three recommendations concern the elderly in the family:

(a) As societies change and change again, systematic research and study is needed on how values are formed in the family, and how these influence the life-course development of men and women;

(b) Roles and relationships of older persons in the family and the community need to be continually redefined as new groups reach the age of 60 and bring with them new experiences and skills into old age;

(c) Social and health-care workers, as well as neighbourhood groups, should be trained in detecting domestic elder abuse and in acquiring the sensitivity needed to deal with it.

III. Family care

The situation

Two words loom large: who? how? Who will provide care for the rising proportion of the very old? How will it be provided?

As long as older people can function independently in daily life, family care is not an issue. It becomes one as frailty or dementia set in, and is critical if public supports are weak or missing. Frailty and dementia increase with age, affecting mainly the oldest old, those of 80 years and above. The oldest old are the fastest growing population group in the world, jumping from 13 million in 1950 to over 50 million currently and a projected 137 million in the year 2025. During that period, the total population will have increased three times, those aged 60 years and more six times, and those aged 80 years and more ten times.

In 1991, the American College of Emergency Physicians reported that some 70,000 older persons were abandoned in the United States of America, most on the doorsteps of hospital emergency rooms. 6/ Family members, apparently at the limit of their emotional and financial resources, dumped their elders. Whether in developing or developed countries, a community response seems to be missing, although not every community response is equally commendable. The Massagetae folk group of the northern Caucasus had, in their own way, a community response, according to Herodotus. Torn between honouring their elders and being burdened by them, the Massagetae ceremonially killed and ate their elders; it was considered to be a misfortune not to have lived long enough to be sacrificed.*

In the present day, families are too often left to fend for themselves when faced with the burden of care that can, in extreme cases, stretch over 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. The family itself is put under strain, and the primary caregiver's most basic human rights are often lost. The primary caregiver can lose career, friends, leisure, freedom, privacy, sleep and money. Other family members customarily lend instrumental and expressive support, such as financial contributions and companionship, but by most accounts the burden lands squarely on one pair of shoulders.

A simple switch from child-rearing to elder care is hardly possible using, as it were, the time gained from fewer years of child-rearing.

> "Caring for elderly people, unlike caring for a normal child, involves increasing dependency. In dealing with increasing dependency, five crises are encountered which contrast sharply with the demands made during child rearing: awareness of degeneration, unpredictability, time constraints, the caregiver-receiver relationship, and lack of choice." 7/

Examining these five crises, it can be seen that, first, degeneration is a much feared outcome compared with the much valued development of a child. Second, the course of degeneration is unpredictable compared with the well-known stages of childhood. Third, elder care imposes time constraints since the burden is not shared as a rule, contrasting sharply with child-rearing, which is shared with kindergartens, play groups, schools, babysitters and by children visiting a friend's house to play or stay overnight.

The fourth crisis concerns relationships. While the relationship between parents and young children is well defined with love being reciprocal and authority residing in the parent, no such

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*As quoted in Eric Winter, "An ageing world: the equivocal response", *Ageing and Society*, No. 10, 1990, p. 226.

norms govern care for an older adult. Indeed, old norms may need to be reversed in adult caregiving and no assurances can be given about whether the caregiver and care-receiver will get along in their new dependency relationship. No safeguards exist against one dominating the life of the other, and therefore the likelihood of conflict is increased. This facet of adult caregiving contrasts sharply with infant caregiving.

Finally, in age care, there is usually no choice. Child-rearing can be avoided or postponed while elder caregiving must be done at once when needed, forcing caregivers to put aside activities, plans, and personal development while ushering in health and financial problems. Meeting caregiving demands can deprive caregivers of basic physiological needs, as well as security, social integration and self-esteem.

Caring for severely incapacitated older family members is not the same as caring for children. It cannot be dealt with in the same way; nor can it be done by one person.

Who?

In caregiving, the lines are clearly drawn along gender lines. The caregiver in an elderly couple is most likely to be the wife, because women generally live longer than men and are younger than their husbands. When a spouse is unavailable or the level of support required exceeds the capacity of the spouse, adult daughters usually assume the role of primary caregiver.

Sons often provide instrumental help such as house repairs or financial support but only in rare circumstances do they provide physical care. Well-known exceptions are Philip Roth and Robert Anderson who took care of their incapacitated fathers and wrote about the experience: Roth in "Patrimony" and Anderson in his play "I never sang for my father".

Given the burden of caregiving in itself and the increase in the numbers of the very old, three options emerge: (a) women should continue to carry the ever-mounting caregiving burden; (b) sons and other relatives should cooperate in physical caregiving; (c) Governments should provide adequate instrumental supports.

A survey conducted in Kitakyushu, Japan revealed that a majority of women would choose institutional care for frail older family members; and a majority of men would opt for their wives to care for the frail ones in the home. 8/ It would seem only natural that potential care-recipients, and potential caregivers, have different views on the matter and therefore it might be necessary to examine the fairly universal preference of male-dominated Governments for home care over institutional care. Governments stress that home care is more humane for the frail elder; doubtless this is so. Meanwhile, unless home care is supported by community services, it may be inhumane in the extreme to place the burden entirely on the caregiver.

Perhaps not until women participate equally in national Governments, and men equally in caregiving, will the right synergy be achieved finally to bring about peace, to transform the military industrial complex, and to use the peace dividend for establishing a caring, in place of a warring, society. Where the proportion of women in Government is high, as in Scandinavia, so is the Government's support for family and community care of the older population.

Trends suggest that as development proceeds, old-age security is likely to shift from family support to public support, or from personal transfers to public transfers. While much has been written about the rising public cost of care, and possible intergenerational conflicts, dire predictions cannot be taken too seriously while astronomical sums continue to be found for arms.

How?

As the world makes the demographic transition* towards an elderly population of 10 per cent around the year 2000 - and moves towards a projected elderly population of 25 per cent in the year 2050 - a collective response to elder care needs to be established and systematized. Initiatives under way include "Comprehensive community care" and "Small area planning" by the World Health Organization; the "Welfare mix" approach of the European Centre for Research and Policy, and others.

A simple but useful model has been proposed. While recognizing the individual support components of family, community, social agencies and government, the model emphasizes the ever-changing, interactive nature of the support system from both an individual and an ecological perspective:

> "If one can envision an older person at the center of a series of concentric circles, each containing a different kind of support, ranging from informal at the center to formal at the periphery, the concept of a broad-based social care system becomes clearer. Older persons interact with each of these circles at varying times and for varying types of assistance, and at times these separate networks interact and even overlap." 9/

In the outermost circle lie the political entities that determine the basic social policy and entitlements of older people. A little closer are the governmental and voluntary agencies that carry out the economic and social policies and services. Still closer are the quasi- or non-service formal organizations, often referred to as mediating structures, which include religious organizations, racial, cultural, social, neighbourhood and block groups, as well as individuals such as mail carriers, shopkeepers, bartenders, and building superintendents. Such groups or individuals often serve as a link between the individual and society, as well as offering assistance of an informal nature. In the model, this tertiary network resembles the informal network but springs from and is related to formal social structures.

Finally, closest to and most involved in the daily life of an older person are the individuals who compose the innermost circle: the informal support system of kin, friends and neighbours. It is these significant others with whom older people have the most frequent interaction and who provide the broad base of social care throughout the world.

> "Although in the model each support element is separate and distinct, the amount of interaction between the subsystems is considerable, illustrating the dynamic nature of the system. Not only do older people receive help from - and therefore interact with - family or tertiary organizations, for example, but they often provide as much help to other generations in the kinship system or to friends and neighbors as they receive in return. Increasingly, older people are also a significant factor in the political scene, influencing legislation as well as receiving benefits from the political process. Thus the interdependence of generations across the life course is crucial to the operation of the system model as a whole and to its several parts. Only in the case of the most impaired elderly does the flow of assistance tend to be asymmetrical, flowing usually in only one direction." 9/

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*This term refers to the move towards an ageing population, which is manifest in several parts of the world and incipient in all the rest. In demographic terms, a population is said to be ageing when the share of people in the older age group increases and the share of children and youth decreases, resulting in an ascending median age. In 1950, 200 million persons were aged 60 years and over in the world, constituting 8 per cent of the total global population. By 2025, there will be a sixfold increase in this number to a projected 1.2 billion people, constituting about 14 per cent of the total global population. The median age of the world population will jump from 23.4 years in 1950 to 31.1 years in 2025. *The World Ageing Situation* (ST/CSDHA/14, 1991), p. 11.

In sum, family care can no longer be a synonym (or euphemism) for female care (and usually only one female). It requires collaboration, partnership, mix. All three words are essential for effective family care and reflect the current direction of the United Nations programme on ageing. As progress is made towards implementing the set of eight global targets on ageing for the year 2001, 10/ which were adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/86, the strategies for each target envisage collaboration between the formal and informal sectors.

Whether action on ageing takes place at the global or family level, society benefits when the tasks, costs and decision-making are shared and the various actors are empowered (by self or the environment) to play a participating role.

Recommendations

In view of the demographic and role changes occurring in the world, the following five measures are recommended:

(a) More Government and community support services for family caregiving;

(b) More cooperative family caregiving, with training for all family members;

(c) More flexible employment practices, including care facilities adjacent to the workplace, to enable men and women to care for older family members;

(d) More equitable benefits (similar to the benefits for those serving in the forces), tax deductions, remuneration or pension entitlements for family caregiving;

(e) More community-integrated and barrier-free housing that would enable the elderly to live independently but near the family and in the community.

IV. Summary and conclusion

The ageing of individuals and populations is one of the sweeping changes of the late twentieth century. It is both a cause and an effect of changes in the values, norms and organization of community life. It promotes important values and norms: lifelong individual development, intergenerational dialogue, equity in family caregiving, community solidarity, cooperation between the formal and informal sectors and between the social and health services. Ultimately, it promotes an appreciation of a mature society: mature in skills, understanding and sustainable development forms. Ageing challenges society's social, economic and humanitarian sensibilities to mature as individuals mature with age. It is one factor contributing to a new world order and a new family life.

Families influence and reflect society's values. Changes in values are taking place across the world and within the very heart of the family. Slowly a consensus on values is emerging. One such consensus as suggested by the caption for IYF, implies that the building of democracy is in process in varying ways in the many family forms or blueprints throughout the world. Democracy implies empowerment.

Empowerment has many interpretations in concept and practice. It can be brought on by something in the environment or well up from within the individual psyche. For all its complexity, empowerment is a clarion call for a more egalitarian, democratic, and humanitarian social order. In one sense, it goes back to the beginning of time. In another, it lies ahead as a promise of the next millennium. In this pivotal decade between two millennia, empowerment is an important component of a paradigm shift and a sign of better things to come.

Notes

1/ Nona H. Cannon, "Self-otherness: a goal for the family", background paper delivered at the seminar on family life education for peace, University for Peace, Costa Rica, 12 January 1992, p.1.

2/ E. A. Fattah and V. F. Sacco, *Crime and Victimization of the Elderly* (New York, Springer-Verlag, 1989), p. 53.

3/ Estella Norwood Evans, "Liberation theology, empowerment theory and social work practice with the oppressed", *International Social Work*, vol. 35, 1992, p. 142.

4/ Erik H. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed: A Review* (New York, W. W. Norton, 1985), pp. 32-33.

5/ Mervyn Eastman, *Old Age Abuse* (Mitcham, Surrey, Age Concern England, 1984), p. 36.

6/ *The Economist*, 4 April 1992, p. 53.

7/ Valerie Braithwaite, "Caregiving burden", *Research on Aging*, vol. 14, No. 1 (March 1992), pp.15-16.

8/ United Nations, "Summary of the discussion and the papers and recommendations of the United Nations International Conference on Aging Populations in the Context of the Family" held at Kitakyushu, Japan, 1990 (ESA/P/WP.113), p. 35, para. 190.

9/ Marjorie H. Cantor, "Social care: family and community support systems", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 53, May 1989, pp. 103-104.

10/ "Global targets on ageing for the year 2001: a practical strategy: Report of the Secretary-General" (A/47/339).